

1879 18

LETTERS

WHICH PASSED IN

H. Cavendish (W.) 5th Duke of Devon

GREAT BRITAIN,

RELATIVE TO THE

ABSENTEE TAX.

D U B L I N :

Printed in the Year MDCC LXXII.

LETTERS

WHICH PASSED IN

GREAT BRITAIN,

RELATIVE TO THE

ASSISTEE TAX.

DUBLIN:

Printed in the Year MDCCLXXIII.

LETTERS

WHICH

Passed in Great Britain, &c.

*From the Duke of DEVONSHIRE and other
Lords to Lord NORTH.*

My LORD,

IT is publickly reported that a Project has been communicated to the King's Ministers, for proposing in the Parliament of *Ireland* a Tax of Regulation, which is particularly and exclusively to affect the the Property of those of His Majesty's Subjects who possess Lands in that Kingdom, but whose ordinary Residence is in this.

It is in the same manner publickly understood, that this extraordinary Design has been encouraged by an Assurance from

Administration, that if the Heads of a Bill proposing such a Tax, should be transmitted from *Ireland*, they would be returned with the Sanction of His Majesty's Privy-Council here, under the Great Seal of *England*.

My Lord, we find ourselves comprehended under the Description of those who are to be the Object of this unprecedented Imposition.

WE possess considerable Landed Property in both Kingdoms ; our ordinary Residence is in *England*. We have not hitherto considered such Residence as an Act of Delinquency to be punished ; or, as a Political Evil to be corrected, to the Penal Operation of a Partial Tax.

WE have had many of us, our Birth, and our earliest Habits of this Kingdom ; some of us have an indispensable Publick Duty, and all of us (where such Duty does not require such Restriction) have the Right of Free Subjects, of choosing our Habitation in whatever Part of His Majesty's Dominions we shall esteem most convenient.

WE

WE cannot hear, without Astonishment, of a Scheme by which we are to be stigmatized, by, what is in Effect, a Fine for our Abode in this Country, the principal Member of our *British* Empire, and the Residence of our Common Sovereign.

WE have ever shewn the utmost Readiness in contributing with the rest of our Fellow-Subjects, in any legal and equal Method, to the Exigencies of the Publick Service, and to the Support of His Majesty's Government.

WE have ever borne a Cordial, tho' not an Exclusive Regard, to the true Interest of *Ireland*, and to all its Rights and Liberties : To none of which we think our Residence in *Great Britain*, to be in the least prejudicial, but rather the Means, in very many Cases, of affording them a timely and effectual Support.

WE cannot avoid considering this Scheme as in the highest Degree injurious to the Welfare of that Kingdom, as well as of this ; its manifest Tendency is to lessen all Landed Property there, to put Restrictions upon it, unknown in any Part of the *British* Dominions ; and, as far as we can find, without Parallel in any civilized Country.

try. It leads directly to a Separation of these Kingdoms in Interest and Affection, contrary to the standing Policy of our Ancestors, which has been, at every Period, and particularly at the Glorious Revolution, inseparably to connect them by every Tie both of Affection and Interest.

WE apply to your Lordship in particular: This is intended as a Mode of Publick Safety; and as we conceive the Treasury of *Ireland*, as well as that of *England*, is in a great Measure within your Lordship's Department; we flatter ourselves we shall not be refused authentick Information concerning a Matter in which we are so nearly concerned; that if the Scheme which we state to your Lordship doth exist, we may be enabled to pursue every legal Method of Opposition to a Project, in every Light, unjust and impolitick.

We have the Honor to be

Your Lordship's most obedient,
and most humble Servants,

London,
Octob. 16, 1773.

DEVONSHIRE,
ROCKINGHAM,
BESBOROUGH.
MILTON,
UPPER OSSORY.

My

*From Lord NORTH to the Duke of
DEVONSHIRE.*

Bushy-Park, Oct. 18, 1773.

My LORD,

I HAD Yesterday the Honor of receiving a Letter, signed by your Grace, and the Lords, *Rockingham, Besborough, Milton, and Upper Ossory*. As it does not relate particularly to me, but concerns equally others of His Majesty's Servants, I cannot with Propriety return my Answer before I have communicated the Contents of it to them, which I will take the first Opportunity of doing. I am persuaded that your Grace and the other Lords will excuse this unavoidable Delay, and have the Honor to be with the greatest Respect,

My Lord,

Your Grace's

Most faithful humble Servant,

NORTH.

*From Lord NORTH to the Duke of
DEVONSHIRE.*

Downing-Street, Oct. 21, 1773.

My LORD,

YOUR Grace and the Lords *Rockingham, Besborough, Milton, and Upper Ossory*, having, in your Letter of the 16th, desired authentic Information concerning a Project of proposing to the Parliament of *Ireland*, a Tax upon the Landed Property of such Persons whose ordinary Residence is out of that Kingdom.—I will endeavour to state, in a few Words, what has passed upon the Subject.

IN the Course of the Summer, the Lord Lieutenant of *Ireland* sent over several Propositions for restoring the Credit, providing for the Debts, and putting upon a proper Footing, the Finances of that Kingdom; at the same Time he informed His Majesty's Servants here, that he had reason to believe, that among other Modes of Supply, there would probably be a Tax of the Nature mentioned in your Grace's Letter.

THE

THE Answer which was returned to His Excellency, by those of His Majesty's Servants, to whom this Communication was made, was to the following Effect; that if the *Irish* Parliament should send over to *England* such a Plan, as should appear to be well calculated to give Effectual Relief to *Ireland*, in its present Distress, their Opinion would be, that it ought to be carried into Execution, although the Tax upon Absentees should be a Part of it,

I BEG Leave to trouble your Grace to communicate this Information to the other Lords, and have the Honor to be with great Respect,

&c, &c. &c.

NORTH.

Circular

Circular Letter.

I Am desired by the Duke of *Devonshire*, Lord *Besborough*, Lord *Upper Ossory*, and Lord *Milton*, to communicate to you the inclosed Papers which contain what has passed between us and His Majesty's Ministers upon the Information we had received of a partial Land Tax, which is calculated, to affect only those who do not commonly reside in that Kingdom.

WE thought it proper to apply to Lord *North* in order to authenticate our Intelligence, and to lay a proper Ground for a future Proceeding on this Subject, it was thought respectful to Government not to give too easy a Credit to the Report of so very extraordinary a Procedure.

It appeared necessary to lose no Time in stating our Objections, that we might give the Ministry here an Opportunity of reconsidering the Matter before it should be openly countenanced by the King's Servants in *Ireland*.

LORD

LORD *North's* second Answer to our Letter contains an explicit Avowal of the Design ; it is coloured over with the usual Pretences of supplying the Revenue, and restoring Public Credit ; but, if the ordinary Revenue of *Ireland*, by any Management, is become now, in the Time of profound Peace, so unequal to the Support of the Establishments as to require extraordinary Aids, we cannot conceive that the Necessity of *New Taxes* can furnish a Reason for imposing such as are *unjust*.

THE *Irish* Parliament meets again on the 28th of this Month. Many Gentlemen of Consideration for their Interest and Abilities will oppose this Project in *Ireland*, but with the previous Countenance it has received here, it is to be apprehended that their Opposition may prove ineffectual, and that the Tax Bill may be transmitted to *England* before the End of *November*.

THE Opposition therefore, in order to be effectual must be early, and it must be made in *England* as well as in *Ireland*. We have a Right to be heard by our Counsel against this Measure, and may oppose it in every Stage of its Progress before the Privy-Council here.

It is therefore wished that a general Meeting of those who are most immediately concerned may be held in *London* about the *Middle of November*.

You shall undoubtedly be informed of any future Steps that may be taken in this unprecedented Plan of Taxation, and shall receive proper Notice of the precise Time and Place that shall be thought adviseable for the Meeting.

I have the Honor to be

Your most obedient

humble Servant

Grosvenor-Square,

October 30, 1773.

I N I S.

6 DE 58